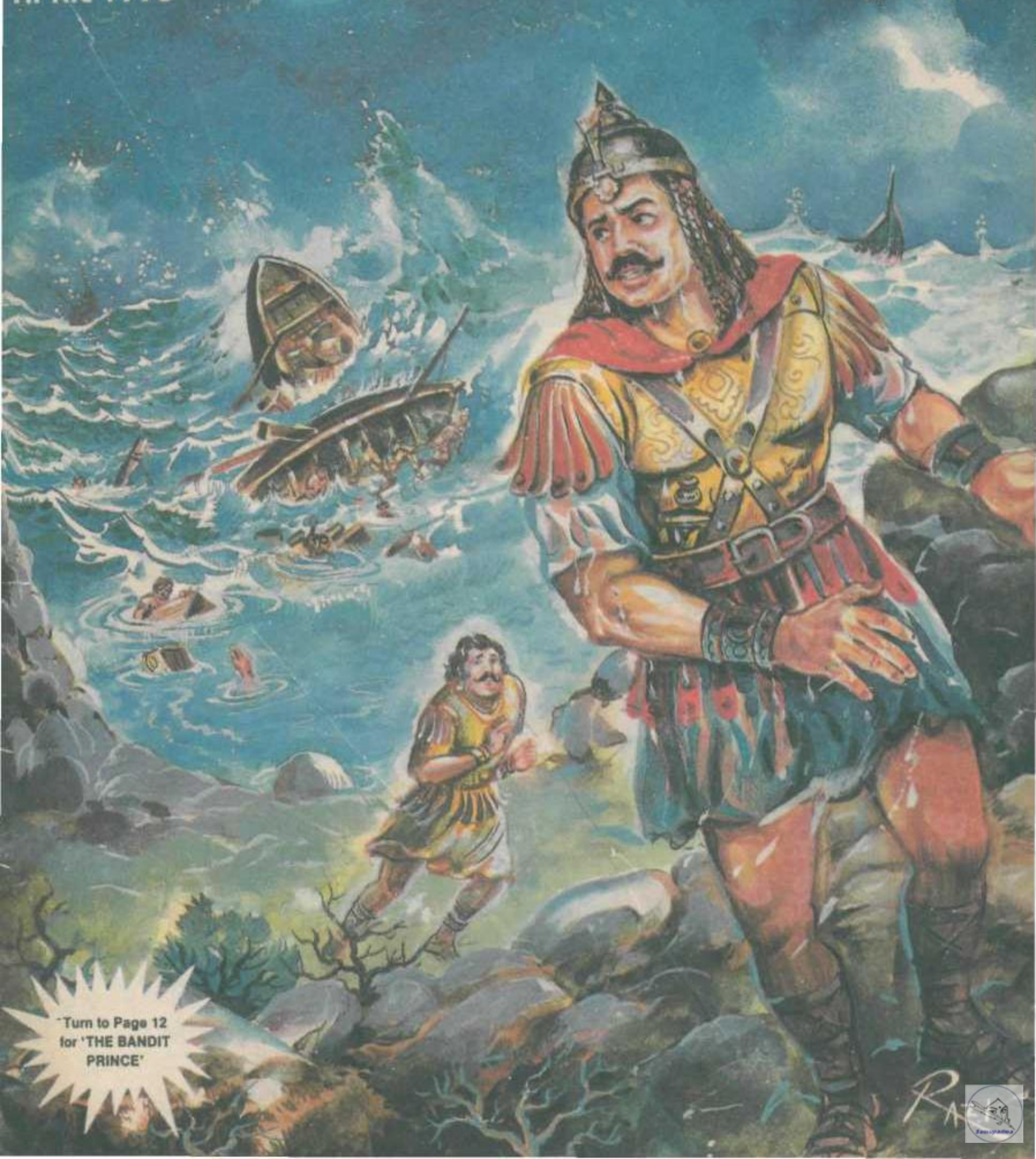


CHANDAMAMA

APRIL 1990

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Turn to Page 12
for 'THE BANDIT
PRINCE'





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after homework. One
before

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CHANDAMAMA

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LAST DAYS OF THE BUDDHA: The immortal saga of the great soul comes to an end.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA: The spiritual prodigy's eventful youth—through pictures.

An anecdote to amuse you—through pictures again, a significant legend, a bunch of refreshing stories and all the regular features..

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SAVE MOTHER EARTH

"Mother Earth is now suffering from AIDS—her immune system is being devastated by poisons in our waters and air, by the savage destruction of the tropical forests, by damage to the ozone layer... If we want a common future, or any future at all, we have to begin uncommon action now." This was stated by Mr. Anwar Fazal, Director, International Organisation of Consumers Unions, in a lecture entitled "Our Common Future", in Japan.

What is the uncommon action expected of the people? The action would be different at different planes. The governments have to act through legislations and laws. The United Nations have to arrive at a consensus among its member countries to see that the sky, the ocean and the air are not further damaged. At your plane, you can do much by making people conscious of the dangers of polluting the waters and destroying the forests.

THE VOICE AGAINST INJUSTICE



There are two words any one of which would remind us of the other. They are *Apartheid* and *Mandela*. While most of the people would utter the word Apartheid with hatred, they would utter the word Mandela with respect and hope.

South Africa is a republic belonging to the southern tip of Africa. It consists of four colonies earlier ruled by whitemen, namely the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State. In 1960, South Africa

became a republic. Its capital is Pretoria. Its area is 1,221,037 sq.km. and the population is over three crore.

South Africa is the world's biggest producer of gold and diamond.

It is, however, a very imperfect republic because the natives of the soil do not enjoy equal rights with the minority whitemen. The whitemen believe in Apartheid according to which the people of different racial groups should be ruled by different laws.

To deprive some races of people on the basis of their colour is an ugly idea, to say the least. Nations and people all over the world support the struggle of the South African natives against the policy of Apartheid. The organisation through which the blacks fight against the white dominance is African National Congress. Nelson Mandela was its leader. The white government kept him shut up in jail not for one or two years but for twenty-seven years. Pressure of world opinion forced it to release him recently.

Nelson Mandela is now 71 years of age. During his years in jail, his wife, Winnie Mandela,

held the flag of the black revolution high.

It appears that the white leadership of South Africa has realised that a policy of oppression cannot go on forever. They must cultivate some humility. At least, the present President of South Africa, F.W. de Klerk, seems to be far more sensible than the other white leaders some of whom are fanatically anti-black. The decision to release Mandela was taken by him. Mandela is ready to discuss with de Klerk the problems of the blacks. Let us hope that good sense will prevail on all and the foolish policy of Apartheid shall come to an end.





THE BANDIT PRINCE

8

(Vir Singh, the usurper of the throne of Sumedh, could not be at peace. That is because he always feared that some people were conspiring against him. He tried to suppress them mercilessly.)

As time passed, Vir Singh was growing impatient. He must conquer some new kingdoms. That was his ambition. He had promised this to the captains of his army. They were eagerly looking forward to his signal for a military expedition. When a king is defeated, the conquerors plunder his kingdom. The victo-

rious king may corner the lion's share of the booty, but his captains also return home rich.

Meanwhile Vir Singh had chosen one of his captains named Kapalchand to the post of the general. Kapalchand was cunning and cruel. One night Vir Singh called him to his chamber and said, "It is time we conquer

DELUGE AT MIDNIGHT

some kingdom. What do you say?"

Kapalchand's face looked brighter. He bowed to his master and said, "Same is my thought, my lord. Once we launch a War, the people's attention would be diverted to that. They would look for fresh news of the encounter. It would be a thrill for them. If we are victorious, we can bring home heaps of wealth. That will bring prosperity to our kingdom. As a result, the subjects will be very happy with you."

"You are right. But which is the kingdom that should be our target?" asked Vir Singh.

"My lord, I have already given much thought to it. I think we should begin with Amritpur. The king of Amritpur, Pavitra Raj, being King Shanti Dev's father-in-law, it is natural that he has a grudge against you. In fact, we have taken into custody several travellers from Amritpur, suspecting them to be spies."

Vir Singh nodded and said, "My dear Kapalchand, I approve your idea. I have just learnt from our chief spy that King Pavitra Raj is ill. This is a golden opportunity for us. I think, we should not waste time any longer. Go and get ready for the expedi-



tion. But do we have enough boats to cross the river?"

"We have a good number of boats to carry arms and the captains. So far as the ordinary soldiers are concerned, they can cross the river by plodding through the water. At this time of the year, the water in the river Nandini is only chest-deep," said Kapalchand.

"Good. How fast can you mobilise the army for crossing the river?" asked Vir Singh.

"If you so desire, I can order them to march even tomorrow!" replied Kapalchand with enthusiasm.

"You are very smart. You



should be duly rewarded—but only after our conquest of Amritpur. Let it be day after tomorrow, at night,” said Vir Singh.

“You are very wise, my lord. That would be a full-moon night. We can stealthily cross the river and suddenly rush upon the capital of Amritpur. They would be totally unprepared,” said Kapalchand.

Vir Singh smiled and patted Kapalchand on the back. Kapalchand took leave of his boss.

Hectic preparations were afoot. Kapalchand called a meeting of the captains that very night. They discussed the plan. All the captains were happy. It is

because they expected very little resistance. To combat a weak opposition would be great fun! Amritpur had many wealthy people. Their wealth would be transferred to the coffers of the captains!

Although Kapalchand cautioned the captains against divulging a word of the plan, some of them could not keep it a secret from their wives and friends. A captain who had the owner of a tavern for his buddy, told him, “I owe you more than fifty silver coins for my drinks, is that so? Don’t worry. I will pay you in gold coins once I am back!”

“Back from where, chum?”

“From across the river!” said the captain, while drinking. “Don’t ask me any more questions.”

“When will that be, chum?”

“Any day after tomorrow—for tomorrow we go!” answered the captain in a jovial tone. He was already a bit tipsy.

Little did he know that the young man who sat on the verandah of the tavern was listening to him intently. The young man looked like a beggar, but if one observed his eyes, one would know that they were the eyes of a brave and intelligent



man.

He was none other than Vasant. Although he now lived in Amritpur, it had become a passion with him to watch the happenings in his native state, Sumedh. He put on different disguises and roamed the land. He was also keen to recruit young men to his group. Vir Singh's despotic rule cannot be tolerated for long. An end must be put to it. He did not know how or when that would be possible. But he had developed a great faith in the mysterious stranger who had snatched him from the clutches of Vir Singh's men. The stranger had told him, "We must do everything possible to protect the innocent people from Vir Singh's tyranny; at the same time we must exercise great control over our movements. We must not harm a single man unnecessarily, even if he is Vir Singh's man. After all the soldiers and guards act as directed by their boss. But, of course, if we see any officer of Vir Singh being cruel towards the common folks, harassing the women or torturing the innocent, we must strike—provided our warning fails to check the fellow from his mischief."

The stranger who always kept



half of his face under cover had magic in his voice. He inspired Vasant, but never let Vasant know who he really was. "You will know when the time comes!" was the reply he gave to Vasant's query.

Vasant left the tavern silently. It was dark at the gate. The captain's horse was tied to a pole. Vasant knew the art of taming the horses. He caressed it and got the feeling that the beast was favourably inclined towards him. Slowly and carefully he untied the horse and led it away—into farther darkness. He checked its reins and the stirrup. Then he hopped onto it and galloped



away.

It took him less than an hour to reach the river-bank. He knew where it was safe to cross. In another hour he was in the capital of Amritpur.

It was a small town. The peace-loving people went to bed quite early. Vasant knocked on the minister's door. A guard opened the door. "I must meet the minister," said Vasant. "Immediately," he added. Luckily for him, the minister overheard him. He recognised a certain earnestness in Vasant's voice. He directed the guard to let him in.

Vasant told him about the impending attack by Vir Singh's

army. There was no time to lose. The minister summoned the commander-in-chief of Amritpur immediately. Both went to the ailing king.

The king looked sad. "My son-in-law and daughter are gone. Now my kingdom too is going!" he sighed.

"My lord, we will protect our land till the last drop of blood has flowed out of our veins," said the commander.

"I know you will. But we are no match for the army of Sumedh. Take position on the river-bank. As soon as the enemy arrives, put forth a proposal for truce. We are prepared to give Sumedh an annual tribute," said the king.

The minister and the commander-in-chief kept silent for a while. Then the minister said, "My lord, we will do as you please. That is the best thing to do in the prevailing situation. But if they disregard our proposal, we will fight."

The king fell silent.

It was a full-moon night. Vir Singh's army assembled on the river-bank. Their arms, several other materials and the captains were in the boats. The soldiers were then ordered to enter the







water.

On the other side of the river the army of Amritpur waited with bated breath. The minister was ready to address Vir Singh and offer a truce as soon as the enemy would come near.

Suddenly there was a howling wind. Soon cries of the soldiers of Vir Singh rent the sky. The boats were upturned. There had been a flash flood. Huge mass of water rolling down from the hills, descended on the invaders who

were at the middle of the river.

In a few minutes the army of Vir Singh melted away! It is difficult to say how many soldiers were swept away to distant shores and how many died. Vir Singh and Kapalchand narrowly escaped the wrath of the flood.

"Providence saved us this time," said the ailing king of Amritpur when the happy tidings reached him. "But we must be ready for a confrontation in the future."

— To continue

ANOTHER DOCTOR NEEDED

In our small town we had many kinds of people. Jeewan was a type, always talking arrogantly. Once he went to the doctor at the government dispensary. "What is your problem?" asked the doctor.

"That is for you to find out!" said Jeewan.

"I cannot. But I have a friend who is an expert at finding out the ailments of

his patients even when the patients do not talk. I will call him. He is a veterinary doctor," quietly said the doctor.





STORY OF

BUDDHA

—By Manoj Das

(The Buddha triumphs over many imperfect scholars and lights the lamp of true knowledge in the hearts of innumerable seekers. He teaches through examples and parables.)

TRUTHS IMMORTAL

One day, while the Buddha was resting at the beautiful park, Jeetavana, a stranger approached him. Nobody around the Buddha knew who he was, but his handsome figure, gait and sweet smile charmed all. He bowed to the Master and said, "I have a few doubts. I will like to put them before you if you permit

me to do so."

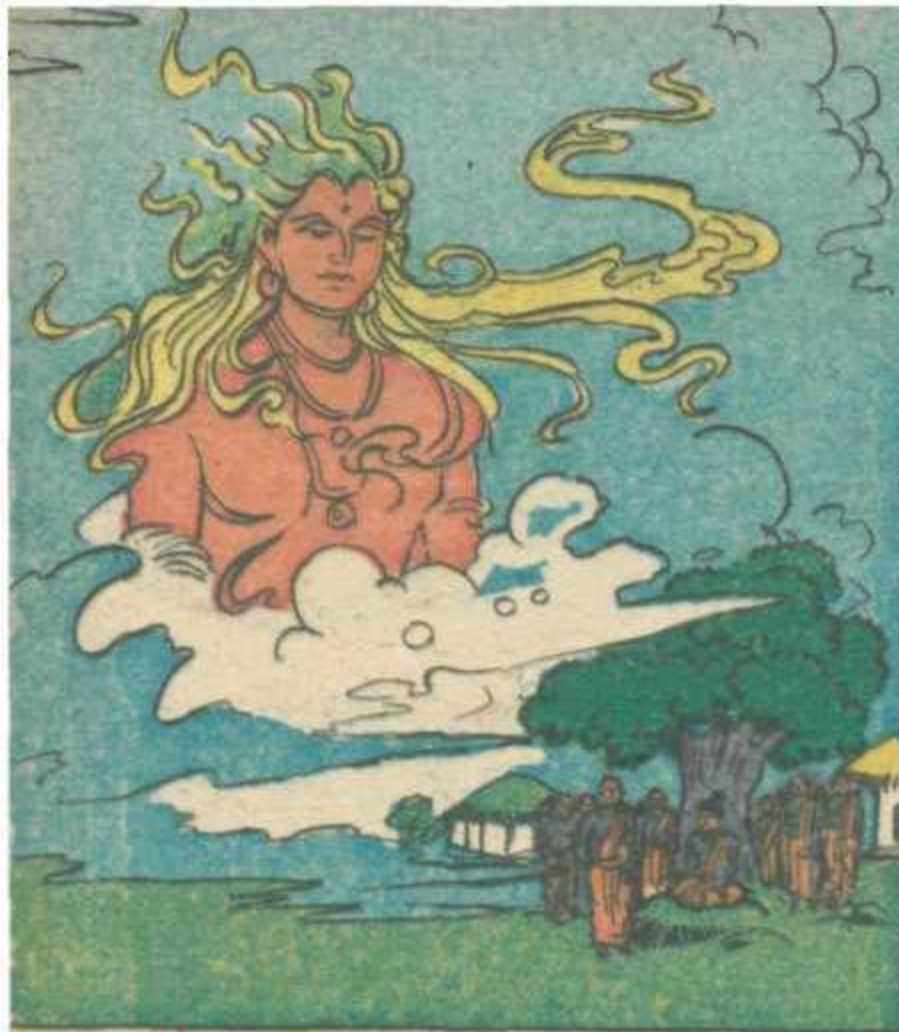
The Buddha smiled and asked, "What are your doubts, O seeker?"

In reply, the stranger asked, "Which is the dagger that inflicts the most grievous wound?"

"Words uttered with anger and hatred," the Buddha answered.

"What is the deadliest poi-





son?" next asked the stranger.

"Avarice is the deadliest poison," replied the Buddha. "It kills one's spirit."

"Is there any time which is darker than the darkest night?"

"Yes, the time one passes in utter ignorance."

"Who is the greatest gainer and who is the greatest loser?" the stranger asked after a pause.

"One who gives to others with love is the greatest gainer. One who receives with greed, without any sense of gratefulness, is the greatest loser," replied the Buddha.

"Which one is the best armour?"

"Patience."

"What is the best weapon?"

"Wisdom."

The stranger bowed to the Buddha in appreciation of the answers and then asked again, "Who is the most crafty thief?"

"Evil thought is the most crafty thief. It steals the splendours of one's mind."

"What is the most valuable wealth?"

"One's virtues."

"What is attractive and what is repulsive?"

"The good is attractive; the evil is repulsive."

"What is most painful and what is most blissful?"

"A guilty mind is most painful; freedom from greed and other selfish passions is the most blissful experience."

"What causes misery the world over? What destroys friendship?"

"Ignorance brings misery to the world. Jealousy and selfishness destroy friendship," replied the Buddha.

"Here is my last question," said the stranger. "What is it that neither fire nor water nor wind can destroy, but which can change the world towards better?"

"It is the blessings generated

by a truly good deed."

The stranger bowed to the Buddha once again and stood up, as if ready to depart. But he simply vanished! Only then it was known that he was no human, but a supernatural being.

* * *

The Buddha did not hesitate to directly intervene in a dispute if that was necessary. Once when he was travelling, he saw an army passing by him. "Where is it heading?" he asked the captain of the army.

"We have a dispute with the neighbouring king. Between our two kingdoms lies an embankment. We know that it is ours. But the enemy king claims it to be his. We will fight. The battle will decide who owns the embankment," replied the captain.

"Can I talk to your king?" asked the Buddha. The king who followed on an elephant dismounted and greeted the

Buddha.

"Must you shed blood for a mound of earth?" asked the Buddha.

"I have no such desire. But the other king refuses to see reason," was the king's answer. The Buddha sent a message to the other king. He came and greeted the Buddha.

"My friends, whom does the embankment serve—the living or the dead?" asked the Buddha.

"The living, O Master," replied both the kings.

"Then must your soldiers and possibly yourselves lie dead on it?" he asked.

The two kings stood looking guilty. The Buddha advised them to discuss the issue and come to a settlement. Indeed, they found that a settlement was not difficult, once their passions for hatred had subsided.

—To continue



THE UPPER HALF



In dire need of money, Kishan pledged his land to the wealthy Gobu Seth for a small amount.

According to the contract Kishan was to grow the crop of his choice and Gobu was to take a half of it according to his choice.



There was a lush crop. Some villagers were appreciating it when Gobu Seth arrived. Said Kishan, "There is equally good crop all over the field. From which half of the field would you like to have your share?"

Replied Gobu, "Kishan, my choice is the upper half of the whole crop. Yes, that is what I had meant!" Kishan looked disappointed.



Gobu loaded his cart with the stalks bearing paddy, leaving for Kishan the stumps of the plants. "You can dry the stumps and sell them as cattlefeed," he gave his parting advice.



A year passed. Gobu was back with his cart to claim his share. Kishan welcomed him. Gobu alighted from his cart, smiling.

But what is this? Kishan had cultivated potatoes. "Take the upper half by all means!" he said very genially. Soon the villagers who were witnesses to Gobu's claim that by half he meant the upper half, came there.



Gobu was obliged to carry the useless upper half of the potato plants in his cart. He had grown wiser—but a bit too late!

BALU AND THE HAUNTED HOUSE

On the river-bank stood a deserted house. The lone owner of the house had left for some distant land, nobody knows why, but never to return. Fifty years had passed. The house was in ruins, but nobody dared to enter it because it was a haunted house.

One moonlit night the villagers met under the banian tree overlooking the haunted house. They discussed the need for setting up a school in the village. "We could demolish the haunted house and

construct a new building there. But for that we need money!" said the village chief.

"I will give you enough money," someone shouted from a fag-end of the gathering. All looked at the man. When they knew who it was, some got annoyed and some were amused.

"Balu! Get out I say, get out!" angrily ordered the village chief.

"Sir, give me only a pinch of opium and I will give you as much money as you need — when I will have any money!" said



Balu, unmindful of the chief's order.

The villagers laughed. In fact, everybody used to laugh at Balu. The fellow always remained under the influence of opium. His father was a small landlord. Balu had squandered away the family property, either generously distributing among those who pleased or flattered him or on eating opium. Now he was bankrupt. He begged from different people small amounts of money to buy a little opium now and then.

The meeting went on. Nobody bothered to pay any attention to him though he pleaded from time

to time for a little opium.

After the meeting was over and the people dispersed, some village boys came to him and said, "Balu! we will give you opium if you can pass your night in the haunted house."

"Give me a little opium and I will pass my night anywhere—even under the water or amidst a fire!" he said.

The little shop in which opium was available was still open. The boys bought a little opium and gave it to Balu.

"What about some food?" asked Balu.

The shop keeper had some food ready. He was expecting a



guest and he had come to learn that the guest was unable to come. He made a parcel of the food with the help of a banana leaf and handed it over to Balu.

The boys were excited to see what would happen to a man who would pass a night in the haunted house. Would he panic and dash out of the house? Would he cry for help? They must wait and see.

They led Balu into the haunted house. They had no courage to enter. But Balu went in, whistling and humming a tune.

The boys waited under the banian tree for an hour. No

sound came from the haunted house. They left for their homes.

Balu lay sprawled on the floor of a room. The house had become the residence of three ghosts. They were surprised to see a man not only braving into their haunt, but also trying to sleep!

They came out and circled him. It is difficult to say whether Balu saw them or not—or even if he saw them—whether he knew them to be ghosts or not.

Suddenly he felt hungry. He opened the parcel and felt the items with his fingers. The first item was a roasted lobster, the



second one was a boiled potato and the third item was a soft bread.

"You Whiskers, you Baldie, you Softy! I will gobble up all of you. I hope, I won't need anything more for the night!" said Balu joyously.

Now, one of the ghosts, because of his moustache, was called Whiskers; the second one, because of his hairless head, was called Baldie and the third one, because of his timidity, was called Softy. The three ghosts were sure that the man had come there not just to pass his night, but to finish them off.

"Just wait, sir, don't cast your spell on us. We understand that you are a great exorcist. But why should you destroy us? Let us leave this house. And, since we will be leaving for good, we can

also tell you where gold is hidden. Here it is."

The ghosts upturned a stone and brought out a jar and emptied it before Balu. It was a heap of gold mohurs. Then they flew away.

Balu ate his dinner and fell asleep, hugging the gold. The boys peeped into the house, anxiously, when it was morning.

"Ask the village chief to come here," Balu commanded them. One of the boys went and called the chief. Some other villagers also came there accompanying the chief. As they looked at Balu with great surprise, Balu said, "You wanted money to build a school. Here is plenty of gold for ten schools! And the house too is free from the ghosts."

Thereafter nobody ever laughed at Balu.





An Ancient Legend

The Long Journey To The Sun

The story is from the early days of the creation of mankind. There was a particular region on the earth on which the sun never shone. In fact, the people of the region knew nothing about the sun. They lived in dusk forever.

One day a traveller from another part of the world strayed into that region. He was surprised to realise that the people of the region did not have the faintest idea about the sun. But he described all about the sun in such a way that the people felt inspired. "We must have the blessings of the sun," they all agreed in one voice. But how to go about it? They did not know.

"Only if someone would

inform the sun that there is a region which is deprived of his light, he will be happy to shine over you. I could have done that. But it has taken me a long, long time to come here. I don't think I can reach the sun in my lifetime even if I begin walking right now," said the traveller with a sigh.

"Let me set out for the sun," said a young man. "I am only thirty years of age now. I am hopeful of living for a hundred years. Even if I walk for seventy years and meet the sun on the last day of my life, I would have done a good job."

All were impressed by the young man's gesture. But another young man, aged twenty,

stepped forward and said, "I have a greater claim to the service because I am younger. There is greater chance of my reaching the sun!"

"In that case I have a still greater claim. I am aged ten only," said a boy. As the boy was justified in his claim, nobody could contradict him.

Just then stepped forward a young lady, the wife of the first young man. She asked, "What if it should take longer than expected to reach the sun? What if it would take more than hundred years?"

Nobody had any answer to her question. After a full minute an elderly man asked her, "What do you wish to say?"

"Let me go to meet the sun," she said confidently.

"How can that be a solution to the problem? You are not

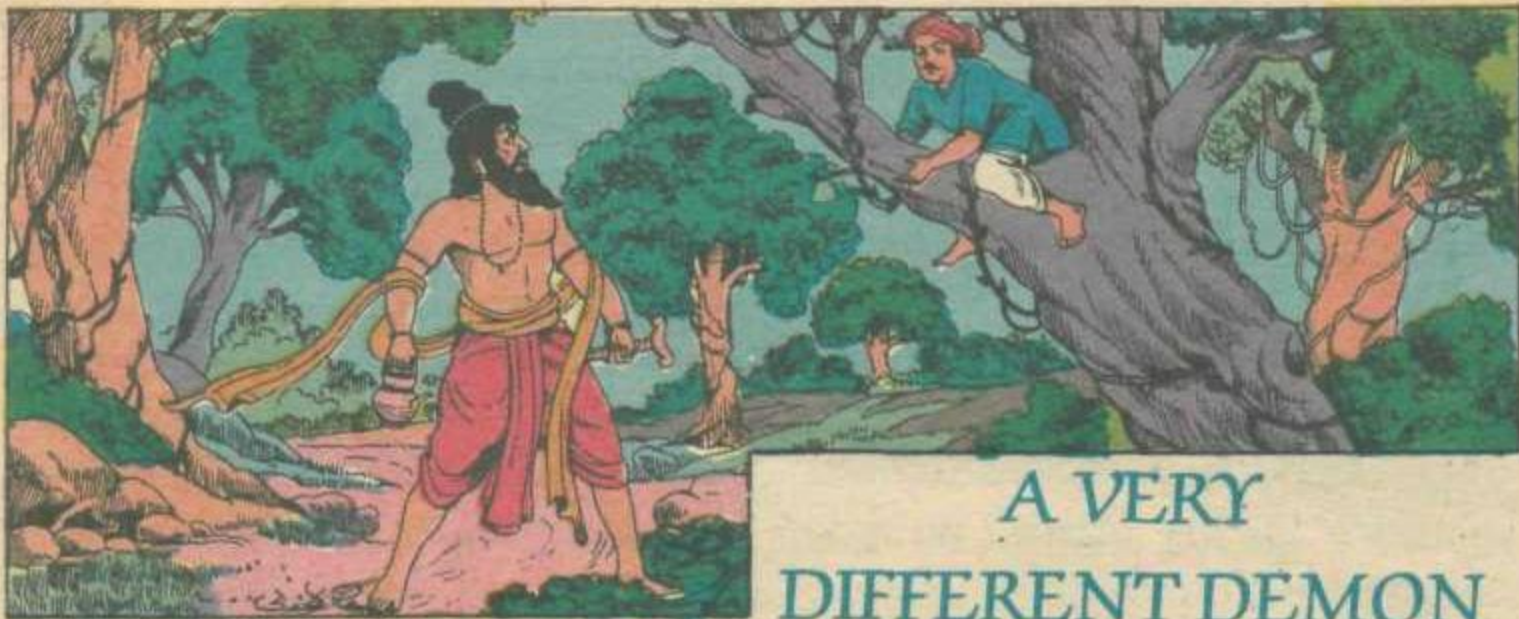
younger than the ten-year-old boy!" commented the elderly man.

"I am not, but I am carrying a child in my womb. It shall be born on my way to the sun. I will carry it with me. When I grow old and die, the child would continue the journey. I will teach him to do so. The day he or she would arrive near the sun, he or she would light a fire in my memory," said the lady.

And she left the region. Years rolled by. One day, after ninety years, the eastern sky looked red. The people of the region knew that the lady had died, but her son had reached the sun. Indeed, soon thereafter the sun rose. The people rejoiced the greatest-ever event in their history.

They named the red aura Dawn, for that had been the name of the daring lady.





A VERY DIFFERENT DEMON

Virendra had heard his teacher saying, "The wrath of an ordinary man can harm us, but the wrath of a spiritual man can become a blessing—if one does not react with anger."

Virendra was poor. He earned his living by cutting wood and selling it in the market. He could just maintain himself. Luckily, he was not married.

How could he marry? Although he was poor, his imagination was quite luxurious! He liked Kusum Kumari, the daughter of the landlord. But how could he dare to propose marriage with her? He kept his desire locked up in his heart.

One day he was in the forest, gathering wood. He saw a dry branch in a tree. He climbed it and was hacking the branch when he heard a sharp cry. He stopped and looked down. A

hermit had been hit by a small chip that flew from his axe.

"You wicked fellow! Must you kill an innocent passer-by?" shouted the hermit.

"Good God!"... Virendra cried out.

"Turn into a demon for your demoniac conduct!" shouted the hermit.

"Virendra jumped down and fell flat at the hermit's feet and said, "O holy man, believe me, I did nothing intentionally. I had never met a hermit in this part of the forest. Had I known of your presence, I would not have ventured into the forest!"

"I see! You seem to be a good man. But you have already turned into a demon. What can be done now?" said the hermit.

"O great soul, you can undo what you have done!" mumbled out Virendra.

"I cannot. However, if ever a lady would love you, you will get back your human form," said the hermit.

"My dear sir, no lady loved me when I had the human form. How can I hope for someone to love me when I am a demon?" asked Virendra shedding tears.

"Don't you worry. Everything is possible," said the hermit, displaying a warm smile. Then he went away.

Virendra ran to a pool and saw his own reflection. Alas, he had become a demon!

"Good that I have nobody very close to me who would miss me in the village," he thought. Then he found out a cave and lay down inside it. He was just beginning to fall asleep when he heard some footsteps outside the cave. He came out. A bandit-chief and his followers were coming towards the cave. The moment their eyes fell on Virendra, they gave out cries of horror and ran away. Unfortunately, Virendra too cried out in panic and ran away. That surprised the bandits. They stopped, realising that it was a timid demon.

So, the demon and the bandits lived in two different caves and did not disturb one another.

A month later a palanquin was passing through the forest, followed by some servants. Suddenly the bandits surrounded them. The palanquin-bearers and the servants fought bravely, but were beaten back by the bandits and fled the scene. The bandit-chief opened the palanquin and found a beautiful damsel inside it. He had thought of stealing her jewellery only, but now he decided to steal the damsel too!

She was led into his hut. Virendra, the demon, was watching the events. He hid behind some trees and, through a hole, saw what happened inside the cave.

"I am charmed by you and I wish to marry you," the bandit-chief told the young lady.

"Fie! How do I care for your wish? Get out!" shouted the young lady. Virendra was amazed at recognising her. She was Kusum Kumari!

"Don't get annoyed. I have more treasure than the king has!" said the bandit-chief.

"I don't care two hoots for your treasure!" shouted the lady.

"Let me see how you don't care!" shouted back the bandit-chief and he dragged her out of



the cave and led her towards a dungeon.

"Halt!" roared Virendra. The bandit-chief was surprised. But when he saw who gave him the command, he burst into a laughter.

"You! You dare to command me! You who ran away at my sight the other day—you who being a demon never kill even a rabbit and live on vegetables!" said the bandit-chief with ridicule.

But before he had laughed again, Virendra gave him a blow and he fell down, dead! Some members of his gang who saw this ran for their lives.

"Kusum Kumari! Don't fear. I will lead you to your parents," said Virendra.

"How did you know my name?" asked Kusum Kumari.

"I know you very well, even though I am a demon," said Virendra.

"I love you, even though you are a demon!" said Kusum Kumari.

At once Virendra got back his human form. Kusum Kumari stood speechless. Virendra told her his story. She smiled and said, "Vir, when I said that I love you, I did not mean to marry you, for no human girl should marry a demon. But now that I find you to be a very human human being, why should I not marry you?"

"You should. In fact, I had always nurtured the desire to marry you," confessed Virendra.

And, of course, they got married soon after Virendra presented Kusum Kumari to her parents.



CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT-18

TREASURY OF KNOWLEDGE

WHO IS HE?

In the city of Mathura, long long ago, there was a beautiful courtesan. Her songs and dances charmed the nobility. She was in much demand.

One day, through the window of her mansion, she saw a handsome young man, a hermit, talking to some people. There was something so noble in his appearance and speech that she was very much attracted towards him.

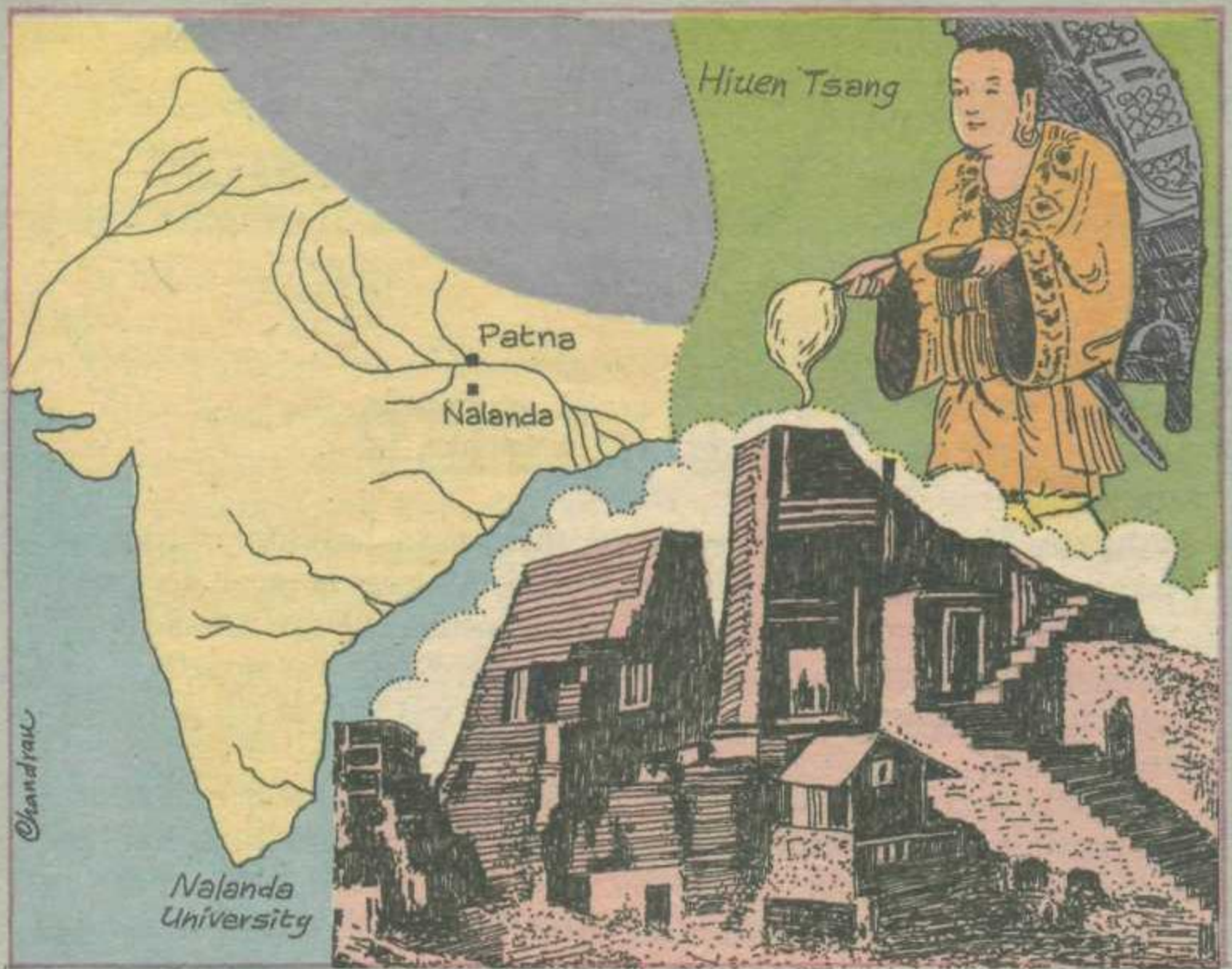
At night she saw him taking rest under a tree in front of her mansion. She sent her maid to him, inviting him to come to her house. But the hermit said, "It is not yet time."

Days passed. The courtesan was once falsely accused of theft. As punishment her hands were cut off and she was thrown outside the city. At night the young hermit met her and said, "Now is the time for me to visit you." Then he spoke many a word of solace and chanted the name of the Lord. The lady died in peace.

Who was he? Who was the courtesan?

DO YOU KNOW?

1. Who was the Westerner to visit India in the 4th century B.C. and leave an account of his travels?
2. Who was the king of Sri Lanka when Ashoka's emissary visited the island?
3. Who was the emissary and when did he visit the island?
4. Who was the next emissary to visit the island?
5. What was the precious gift the second emissary carried?



INDIA: THEN AND NOW

THE UNIVERSITY OF NALANDA

About ninety km. south of Patna in Bihar, in a village known as Bargaon, can be seen the ruins of one of the greatest universities of the ancient world, Nalanda. It was founded perhaps in the 5th century. The place was considered holy because the Buddha had stayed there for a while, preaching, and Emperor Ashoka

had built a monument in his memory. Mahavira too had lived in the village. However, we do not know who built the great university which accommodated ten thousand students.

The celebrated Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang, visited the university in the early 7th century. He was all praise for the

quest for learning and the discipline which prevailed in the university. He informs us that the Gupta Emperor Narasimha Gupta Baladitya who ruled in the 5th century had built a fine temple at Nalanda and installed a magnificent statue of the Buddha, 80 feet high. During Hiuen Tsang's time a famous scholar named Shilabhadra was the director of the university.

The university attracted students from faraway lands including Tibet, China and the Indonesian islands, particularly Java.

A notable department of the university was its library, consisting of three buildings. One of the buildings had nine storeys. This library perhaps had the largest collection of books in the world of the time.

It is not known when and how this great university was destroyed. There are reasons to believe that it was destroyed by a terrible fire. What caused the fire? Probably some invaders did the mischief.

Nalanda today is a site of unforgettable ruins. A huge Stupa stands at the centre, with the hills of Rajgir at the background.



The Good Old Bicycle

If one has a choice between a car and a bicycle, what should one choose? The answer, ordinarily, would be the car. But more and more wise people are saying—the bicycle. The world has 800 million bicycles. But it should have more. More bicycles means more exercise and less pollution. Together, they mean better health condition. What many do not realise, for a short distance the bicycle is often speedier than the car, for the latter can get stuck in a traffic jam.

NEWS FLASH



The Grandmother's Prescription

Herbal medicines and remedies prescribed by the grandmothers in remote villages are receiving increased attention from the international medical research organisations. This is so not only because the modern medicine is proving more and more costly, but also because the experts realise that they have ignored the efficacy of the folk medicine for long—which may be very effective in a particular climate, culture and life-style.

LET US EXPLORE THE WORLD OF LITERATURE

1. In which Purana is to be found a list of the ancient royal dynasties of India?
2. Who was the author of the poem *Sāre Jāhānse Āchcha*?
3. Which famous statesman of India wrote simplified versions of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata?
4. What is the title of the ancient Indian book on arithmetic and algebra? Who is the author?
5. How many words are there in English language?

ANSWERS

WHO IS HE?

Upagupta and Vasavadutta.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

1. Megasthenes, the Greek.
2. King Devanampiya Tissa
3. Mahendra, the son of Ashoka, in 251 B.C.
4. Samghamitra, Ashoka's daughter.
5. A sapling of the Bodhi tree.

LITERATURE

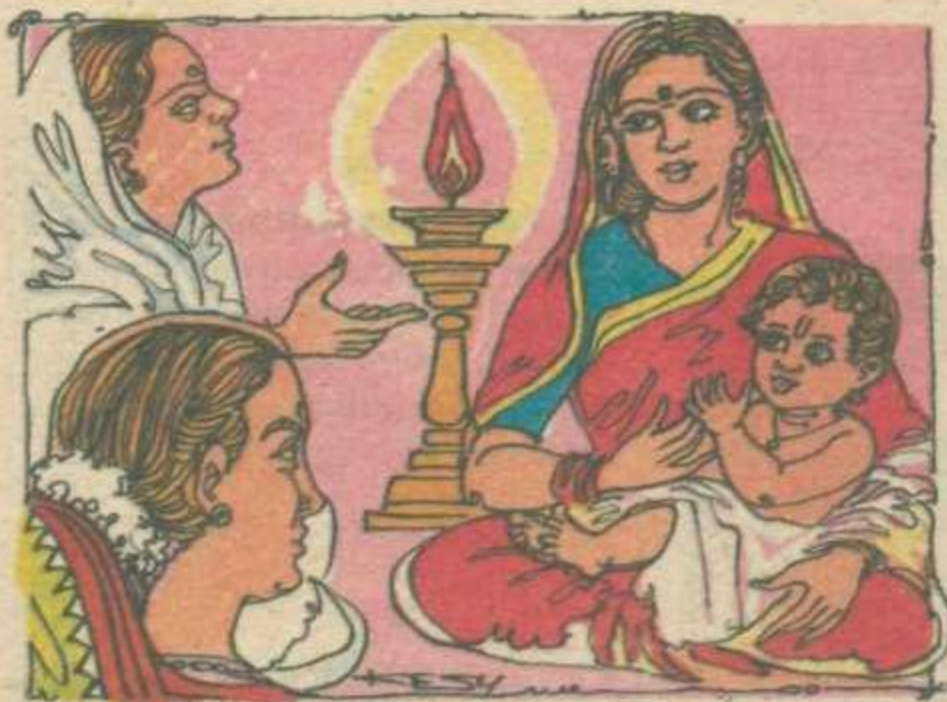
1. The Matsya Purana.
2. Muhammad Iqbal.
3. C. Rajagopalachari.
4. *Lilavati* by Bhaskaracharya.
5. About 300,000.



SRI RAMAKRISHNA

We bring to you the story of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, one of the greatest spiritual masters of the recent times. Although many did not know about this great soul during his life time, later Swami Vivekananda and other disciples of his spread his message far and wide.

On a visit to the holy place Gaya, Kshudiram, a Brahmin who lived in the village Kamarpukur in Bengal, had a strange dream. The Lord told him in his dream that he would like to be born as his son.

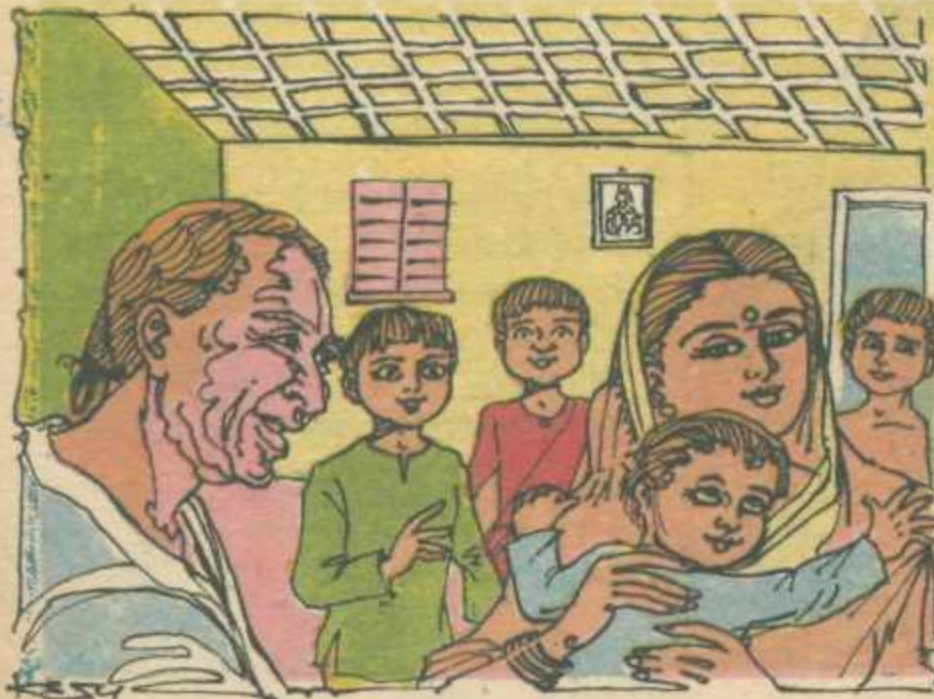


His wife, Chandra Devi, gave birth to their third son on the 17th of February 1836. The father named him Gadadhar—one of the many names of Lord Vishnu. Astrologers asserted that a great soul had come down.



As Gadadhar grew up, he became dear to all. The women of the village were never tired of bestowing their love on him. Smart and intelligent, he was fond of playing and swimming.

At the age of seven, one day Gadadhar was crossing a field when he saw a covey of white birds flying across the sky, against dark clouds. The scene enchanted him. His heart was filled with joy. He had the first experience of trance or *Samadhi*.



He fainted. His friends found him in that condition and carried him home. At home he recovered his senses, but he looked delighted. The experience of *Samadhi* came to him again and again later in life.

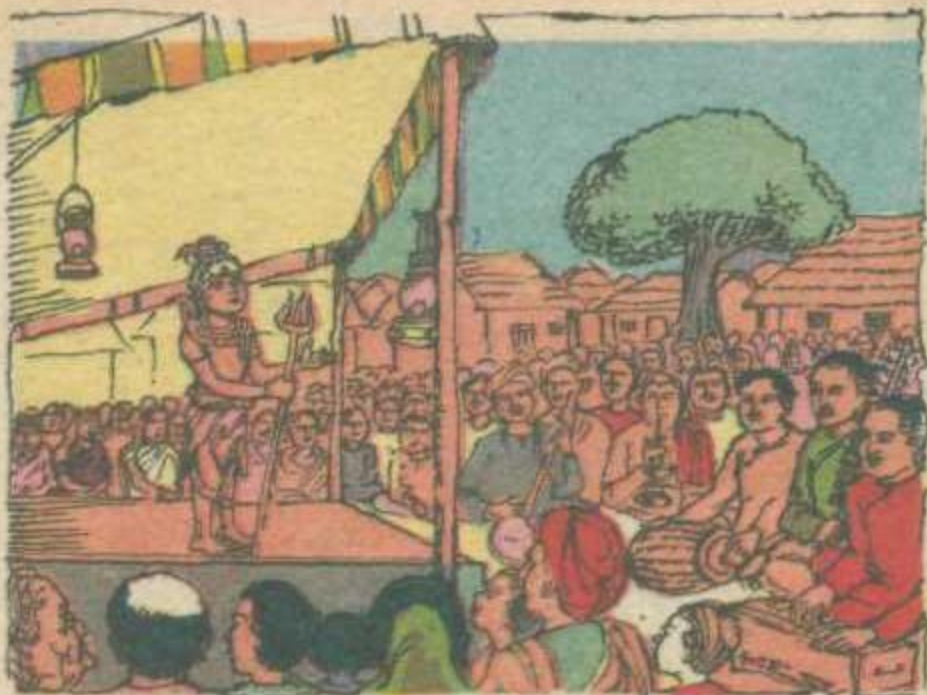
Kamarpukur was a prosperous village. A landlord had built a rest-house for pilgrims through the village. The boy sat there for long spells of time in the company of the holy men. He loved to hear their stories.



One day the wandering ascetics dressed the boy like a young hermit, smearing his body with ash. The boy came home and stood before his mother in his new appearance. The mother gave a start.

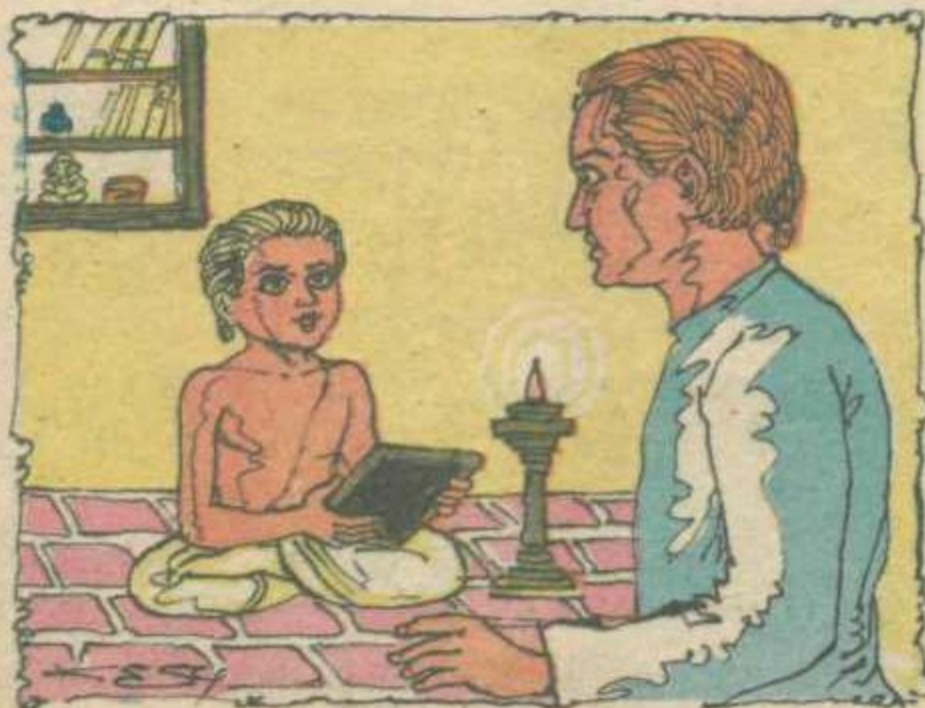
He showed extraordinary brilliance when barely eight. Once when an assembly of Brahmins and noblemen at the landlord's house was unable to solve a problem, the boy who listened to them surprised them by putting forward the correct solution.





Once, at the request of his friends, he appeared as Lord Shiva in a village performance. But as soon as he stood up to enact his role, he entered a trance. The performance had to be stopped.

After his father's death, his elder brother, Ramkumar, brought him to Calcutta. The young boy looked with wonder at the great city. The buildings, people and vehicles amused him.



Ramkumar opened a small Sanskrit school. Gadadhar studied there. But one day he frankly told his elder brother, "I don't find these kind of lessons interesting. What I want is true wisdom; the knowledge of Truth."

—To continue

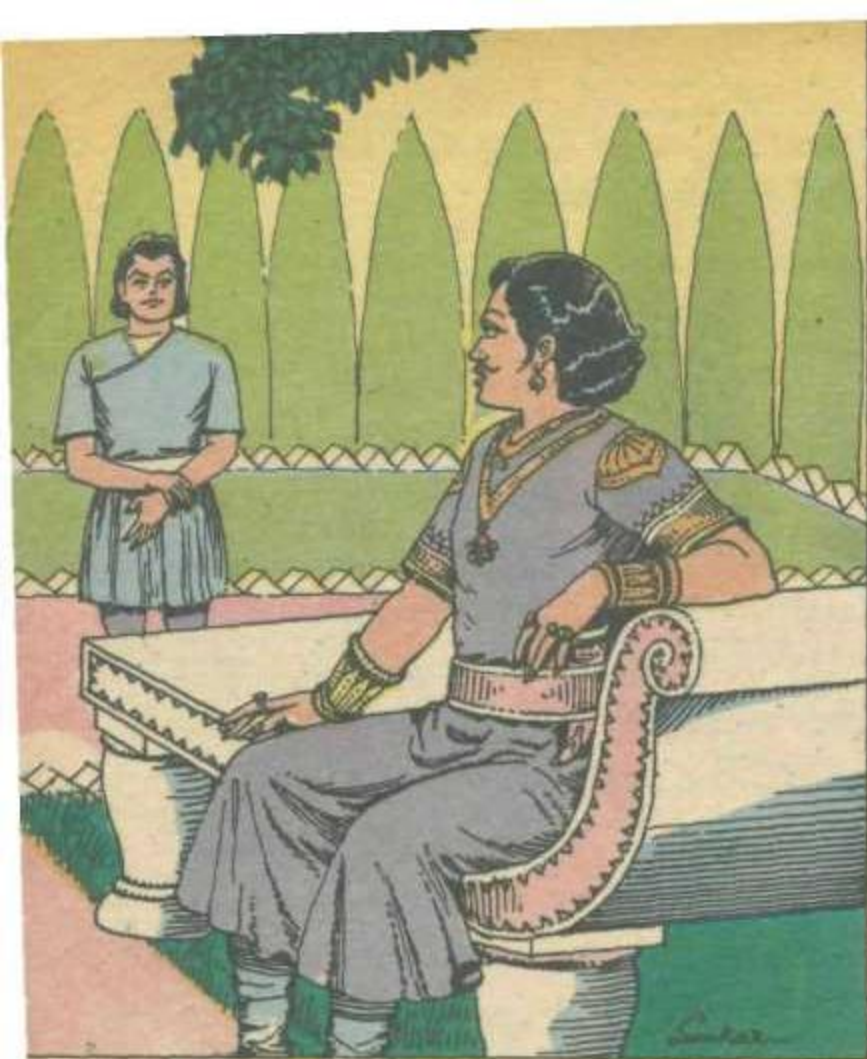
**New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire**

**THE PERFECT
DISGUISE**

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of the roars of thunder and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, obviously you desire to gain some supernatural power. That is why you are taking such pains at such an unearthly hour of the night. Since you are keeping awake at night, you must be falling asleep during the day. Who then is looking after the affairs of the kingdom? I hope, you are not making someone else sit on the throne in your disguise, as King Dev Verma used to do. That is a risky thing to do. Let me tell that





story to you. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief.”

The vampire went on: King Subal Verma ruled the kingdom of Sukanti. He was honest, brave and quite popular as a ruler. He built a number of free dispensaries and rest-houses and laid parks and dug ponds all over the kingdom. At the same time he had put honest and trusted officers at the key-positions. Hence the people lived happily.

His son, Dev Verma was a student in Varanasi. Once in a while he camped in the Himalayas and spent a period in meditation or in observation of Nature. One day he received a

call from his father and returned to his father's capital. The king told the prince, “I have kept something hidden from my courtiers and subjects lest they should feel upset. I am suffering from an incurable disease. My days are numbered. It is time that you ascend the throne.”

Prince Dev Verma was not prepared for this. He grumbled, but the king stuck to his decision. Dev Verma's coronation was performed. A month after that King Subal Verma died.

Dev Verma performed the functions of a king dutifully, but he was not happy with his position. He wanted to devote his time to study and meditation. He was not at all fond of mixing with the courtiers.

One day a young man from another country met him, “My lord, my name is Vidyavrata,” he announced. “I am an expert at imitating the gait, voice and movements of others. I have earned many a reward for this talent of mine. Will you like to test me?”

There was nobody else near the king at that time. The king grew inquisitive. “Well, King Sursen of Jamalgarh is residing with us as our guest. He will visit the

court today. Observe him with a keen eye. He will leave tomorrow. If you can come to our court after that and if our courtiers mistake you as Sursen, you shall be amply rewarded," said King Dev Verma.

Vidyavrata agreed to this. He sat in the court and observed King Sursen. Next day, dressed like a king, he came to the court and told Dev Verma, "My friend, I forgot to discuss an important issue with you. That is why I came back."

The courtiers of King Dev Verma mistook Vidyavrata to be King Suren.

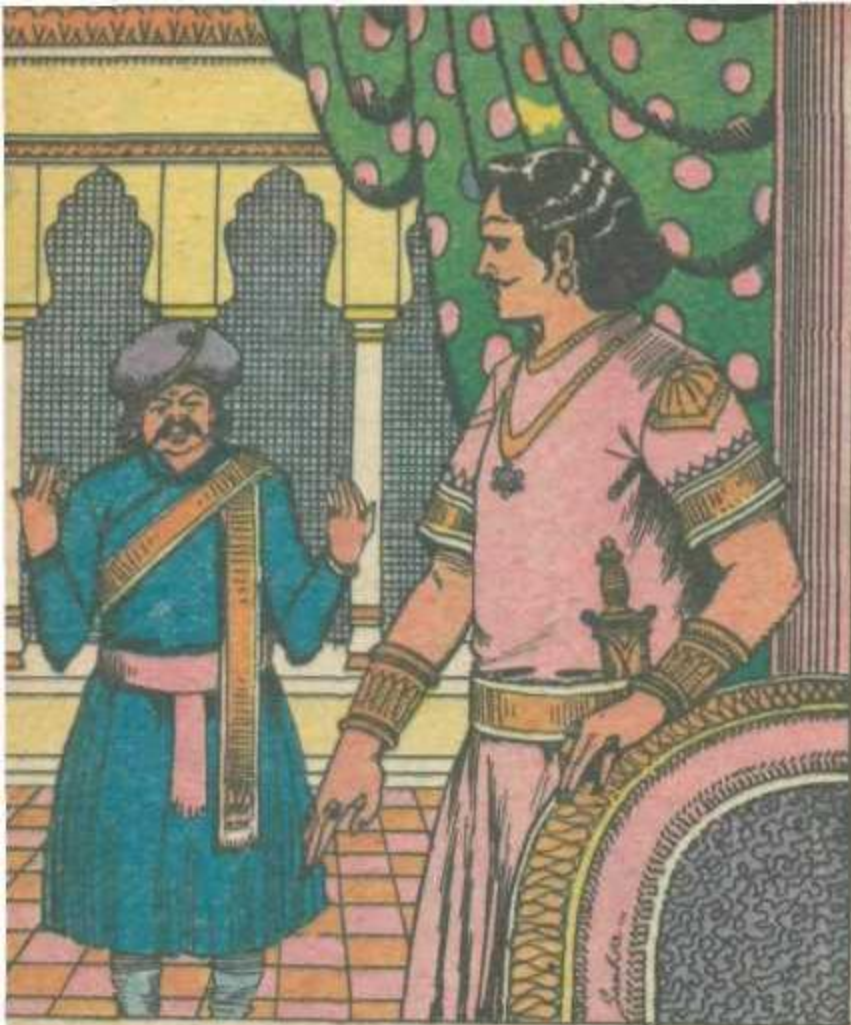
At night Dev Verma told Vidyavrata, "I am deeply impres-

sed by your talent. My friend, you can be a great help to me. Frankly, I do not find any interest in my kingly duties. I want to be left alone. Look at that mansion in front of the palace. I want to take shelter there. Excepting a couple of most trusted servants, nobody would know about it. You must put on my disguise and act as the king. Apart from your uncanny talent in imitating others, it is a fact that you resemble me very closely."

"My lord, will this be a proper thing to do?" Vidyavrata expressed his doubts.

"What is improper in this? At night you can meet me. We can discuss the problems of the





kingdom and I can tell you what you should or should not do!" said Dev Verma.

Vidyavrata could not disappoint the king. He spent three or four days, learning from Dev Verma the etiquettes, codes of conduct and the rules of the court. Then he emerged before the court disguised as Dev Verma. Dev Verma retired to the other mansion.

Indeed, Vidyavrata's acting was perfect. Nobody suspected that he was not the true king. In the evening Vidyavrata reported the day's proceedings to Dev Verma. The true king gave him the necessary instructions.

Days passed. Vidyavrata

became quite adept in statecraft. Dev Verma also saw that the administration ran smoothly. Slowly he stopped giving any advice to Vidyavrata. On his part, Vidyavrata used his common sense and intelligence and did whatever was good for the people.

But for how long can a truth remain hidden? It was widely whispered that the man who posed as the king was not Dev Verma. At the same time everybody agreed that the man who posed as the king was an ideal and noble ruler. Someone distributed copies of a statement saying that the man acting as the king should continue to rule, for the real king did not care for the welfare of the people. A copy of the statement reached Dev Verma. He felt very sad.

The anniversary of King Dev Verma's ascension to the throne was to be celebrated. Village chiefs from all over the kingdom were to attend it. There were rumours galore in the air. Dev Verma told Vidyavrata at night before the anniversary day, "My prestige is reduced to dust because you have been so successfully acting in my role."

"My lord, acting is my art. It is



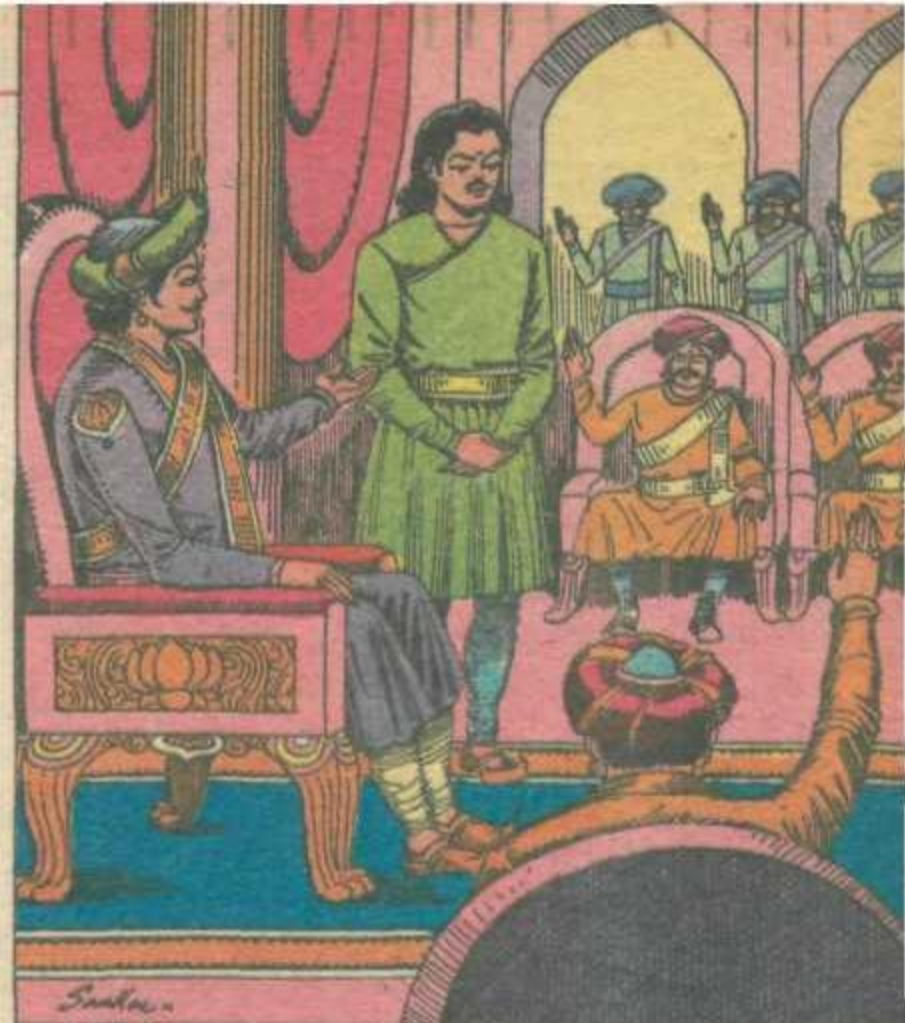
my prestige which will either rise or fall depending on my acting successfully or unsuccessfully. It is a sign of ignorance to say that Your prestige is reduced to dust on account of my acting!" said Vidyavrata.

The king became even more sad at Vidyavrata's words. He said, "However, please be present in the assembly of the village-chiefs tomorrow. I will do whatever is to be done."

Next day, Dev Verma told the assembly, "Gentlemen, it is an open secret that the kingdom was being ruled not by me, but by Vidyavrata. You have seen—how capable he is. Let me announce to you that I propose to regularise his position. I will crown him as the king. A new dynasty will begin its rule on our kingdom."

The assembly at first did not know how to receive the announcement. But someone clapped his hands. Soon all the others did the same.

But Vidyavrata stepped forward and silenced them with a gesture and said, "Listen to me, O gentlemen, King Dev Verma is noble and wise. Have you ever heard of another king who would hand over his throne to someone



else under such a pretext? He is a true ascetic. He has not the slightest attachment for the crown. He would like to pass his days cultivating knowledge. But you all will be unfortunate at losing such a ruler. Let me divulge a secret. Whatever I have done for the people's welfare, it has been done at his inspiration or instruction. It is wrong on your part to think that I am the doer. Do not be foolish enough to accept his proposal."

Vidyavrata's announcement was most spontaneously greeted by the people. The chiefs raised slogans praising King Dev Verma. The king bowed to them and said, "All right. I appoint

Vidyavrata to the post of my prime minister."

The chiefs burst into another round of applause. Now they raised slogans praising the king as well as Vidyavrata.

Soon the kingdom, under the kingship of Dev Verma and counsel of Vidyavrata, became the most ideal state of the time.

The vampire paused for a moment and then challenged King Vikram to answer, "O King, who between the two—Dev Verma and Vidyavrata—is nobler? Hadn't Vidyavrata described the king as ignorant? How then did he describe him as wise before the assembly? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck."

Forthwith replied King Vikram, "Both Dev Verma and

Vidyavrata were noble. But, between the two, Dev Verma was nobler. After all, Vidyavrata was acting under the king's instruction. Dev Verma getting ready to pass on his crown to Vidyavrata was no small sacrifice. To acknowledge someone's merit through such a gesture is a mark of extraordinary nobility.

"Vidyavrata accused Dev Verma of ignorance because Dev Verma failed to realise that his prestige was reduced because of his own lack of interest in stately duties, not because of Vidyavrata's acting skill. Vidyavrata hailed the king again as wise because only the truly wise could look upon his study and meditation as something greater than the kingly power."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



THE DAY THE CHAIR WAS MADE

It is possible that you are seated in a chair when you are reading this story. If you are in your bed or on a swing or on the floor, a few others must be sitting in chairs around you or near you. What we mean to say is, there are chairs galore today. But there was a time when there were no chairs. Small or big, everybody squatted or knelt on the ground or sat on cotton cushions.

There was a king who loved to imagine new things. One day

his heralds announced that the king would reward any inventor who can invent a comfortable seat. Everybody knew that the king was quite generous and when he gave a reward, it was either a handsome amount or a valuable gift. Several ambitious men began to work on model seats. If one put a few stones together and cemented them with lime and mortar, another made a thick cushion of cotton. They carried their models to the king.





The king appreciated their labour, but frankly told them that he was not quite satisfied with their inventions.

In a remote village lived a poor farmer. He sat on the narrow verandah of his hut when the king's herald passed by, beating the drum and making the announcement about the need for a comfortable seat. It suddenly occurred to the farmer that he sat quite comfortably with his legs stretched down from his verandah, his back resting against his wall and his hands resting on two pets of his—his left hand on his dog and his right hand on his goat. Why not make

a seat which will give this much comfort?

The fellow was imaginative and enterprising. He collected some wood. He made the first model for the chair as we see it now. The seat was raised to a height equal to his verandah, there was a plank at the back and there were two bars on both the sides to serve as supports for the hands.

He covered it with a linen and carried it to the king and unwrapped it before him. At last there was something new for the king to look at. He was happy. He grew happier when he sat in it and relaxed. "Excellent," he exclaimed. "This is the kind of thing I desired to find." Then he ordered his treasurer to reward the farmer with a thousand pieces of gold.

As the happy farmer was leaving, the king asked him, "By what name to call your invention?"

"My lord, I have invented the seat all right, but I do not have any knack for inventing new words," said the farmer.

"Never mind. We have twenty wise noblemen in our court. I will ask them to recommend a name



for this novel thing," said the king. Turning to his courtiers, he said, "Gentlemen, I will be back in an hour. Decide upon a good name for this thing in the meantime."

The king left the court for attending to some work inside the palace. One of the courtiers, eager to go down in the court chronicles as the man who named the new thing, said, "It is as comfortable as Paradise. Let us call it Paradise!"

"Nonsense!" said another courtier who was no less eager to make himself immortal. "As if you pass your summer holidays in Paradise and know how com-

fortable it is!"

"Shut up!" yelled the first one. "I may not visit Paradise occasionally, but I will dwell there permanently after I depart from this world, just as my ancestors do. So far as you are concerned, there is a burning dungeon booked for you in hell!" he retorted further.

Now, the first courtier had his supporters and the second had his. Besides, there were a few others ready with suggestions of names for the new thing. They quarrelled and the quarrel grew fiercer and fiercer. They forgot themselves and forgot the value of the invention. Someone



picked up the thing and hurled it at another. Others rushed upon the thing and broke it into pieces and attacked one another with the planks and bars.

The king was back. At once the honourable members of the court came to a halt. The king looked at the broken seat with sad eyes and said, "Gentlemen, I wanted to make one such seat for each of you. But now I realise that you are not yet fit for such a seat, for you destroyed it in no time! Continue to sit on the floor and I too would continue to do the same!"

The courtiers looked guilty

and downcast

The king did not let them use the new seat, but once a thing is invented, its use cannot be checked. The farmer made another seat and yet another. Wealthy people bought them from him. Soon carpenters stepped into the business. We do not know who named it Chair. All we know is, it had come to stay.

But once in a while it is good to ask—does one deserve the chair one occupies? One may not destroy the chair as those courtiers did. But does one honour the position for which the chair stands?



A TEST

Mukund went to the grocery to buy a few things. There was a crowd of customers there. He waited for them to go away. Then he handed over to the grocer the list of items he wanted to buy.

The grocer weighed and gave him the things. His due came to seventy-five rupees. Mukund handed over a currency note to him. He returned the surplus.

Mukund counted the smaller notes and found that the grocer had given him thirty-five rupees instead of twenty-five.

"My brother! You have paid me ten rupees more! You should be more careful with your money!" said Mukund with a smile and returned the note to him.

"Thank you, my brother. The same is my advice to you. Be more careful with your money. Instead of giving me one currency note, you gave me two. Being new, they were stuck together!" said the grocer. "I gave you ten rupees more deliberately," he added.

"I see! Then why did you give me only ten rupees more?" asked Mukund surprised.

"I wanted to test your honesty. Had you kept this ten rupees to yourself, I would not have returned your hundred rupees. I would have donated it to some charitable institution. But as you are honest, here is your hundred-rupee-note !" said the grocer, returning the note to Mukund.

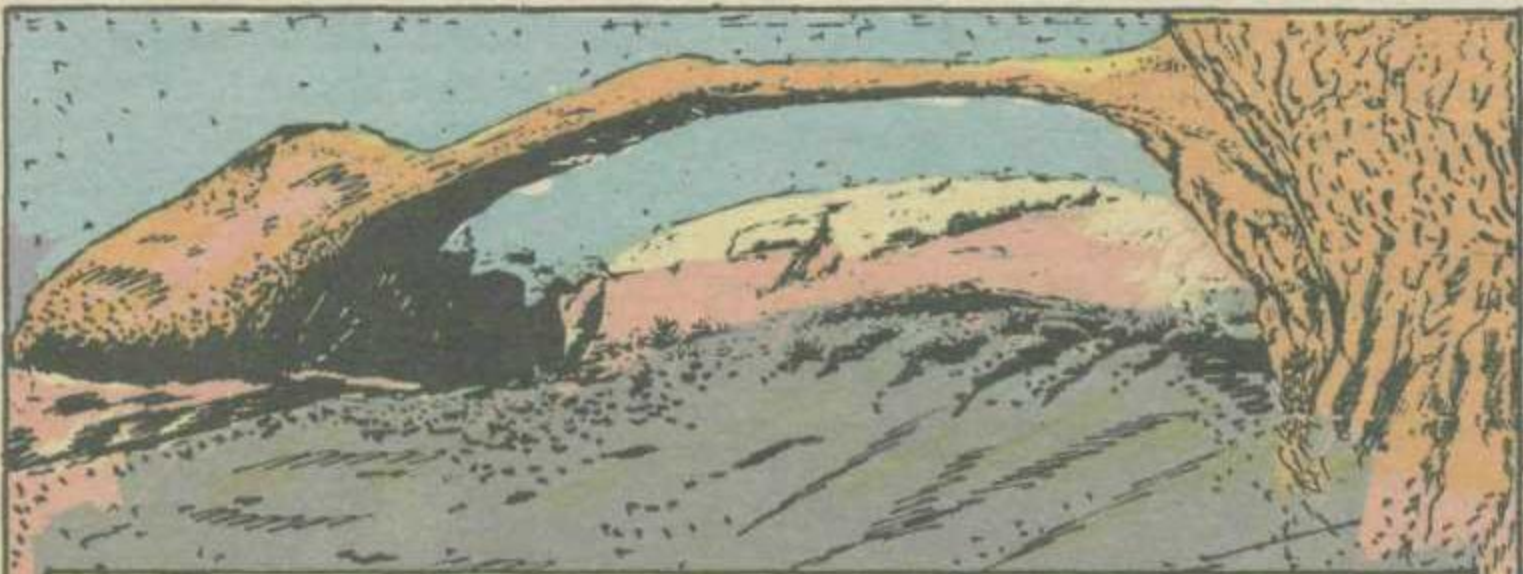


WORLD OF NATURE

A TORNADO IS FORMED WHEN COLD DRY AIR BEHIND A COLD FRONT COLLIDES WITH WARM MOIST AIR, CAUSING IT TO BUBBLE UPWARDS PRODUCING CONVECTION CLOUDS. LOW PRESSURE WITHIN THE CLOUDS CAUSES CONDENSATION AND A FUNNEL IS FORMED. WHERE THIS TOUCHES THE GROUND **TREMENDOUS WINDS WHIRL IN AN ANTI-CLOCKWISE SPIRAL...**

A TORNADO ROTATES AT SPEEDS UP TO 300 MPH (480KM) ALONG A TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION 1,320 FT (400M) WIDE.

THE MID-WEST OF THE USA SUFFERS ABOUT 150 TORNADOES A YEAR, USUALLY IN THE SPRING. IN 1965, 200 PEOPLE WERE KILLED BY A GROUP OF TORNADOES. PARTS OF RUSSIA AND AFRICA ARE ALSO AFFECTED.



THE WORLD'S LONGEST NATURAL ARCH IS **LANDSCAPE ARCH** IN ARCHES NATIONAL PARK, UTAH, USA. IT HAS A SPAN OF 291 FT (89M). THE PARK CONTAINS SEVERAL OTHER NATURAL ARCHES, ALL WERE FORMED BY EROSION ABOUT 150 MILLION YEARS AGO...

RAIN WATER SEEPS INTO CRACKS IN THE SANDSTONE, GRADUALLY ENLARGING THEM. WIND, SNOW AND ICE ALL WEAR AWAY THE SOFT STONE UNTIL IT DISINTERGRATES AND A HOLE IS FORMED.

EROSION IS CONTINUING. EVENTUALLY THE ARCHES WILL COLLAPSE.



THE ASHES, THE TROPHY AWARDED IN THE ENGLAND V AUSTRALIA CRICKET MATCHES, HAS ITS ORIGIN IN 1882, WHEN AUSTRALIA DEFEATED

ENGLAND. A MOCK OBITUARY OF ENGLISH CRICKET WAS PUBLISHED IN THE SPORTING TIMES. IT CONCLUDED WITH "THE BODY WILL BE CREMATED AND THE ASHES TAKEN TO AUSTRALIA."

FASTEST...

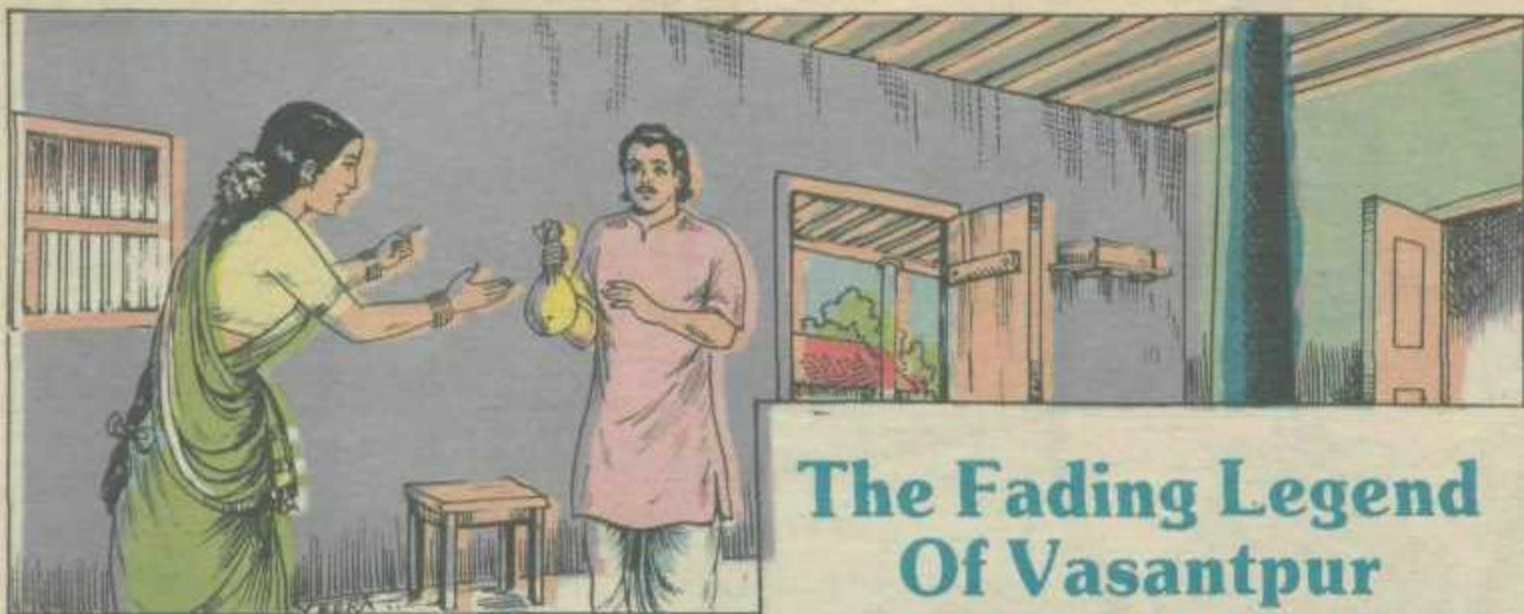
THE FASTEST LONE ROUND THE WORLD YACHTSMAN IS BRITAIN'S **DAVID SCOTT COWPER**, WHO IN APRIL 1980 COMPLETED HIS 30,000-MILE VOYAGE IN 249 DAYS



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medals



The Fading Legend Of Vasantpur

If you ever visit Vasantpur, you will find a house in ruins. It once belonged to Shankar Das. His descendants have now migrated to the city. They are very rich. They own several cloth mills. They just don't care for their ancestral house in the village.

More than a hundred years ago Shankar Das too traded in clothes, but his was a different story. There are still some aged people in Vasantpur who remember the legend concerning Shankar Das. Maybe, the legend will be forgotten in another few years.

Shankar Das was a clerk in a jeweller's shop in the town. One day the jeweller called him and said, "I am going to close down my business. But you have been very good and faithful to me. Here is a hundred gold mohurs for you."

Shankar Das was grateful to his master. He returned home and told his wife about his master's kindness, but he was very sad to have lost his job and a good employer.

"Your master has given this money in recognition of your honesty. This is a very valuable reward. If we make proper use of it, we should prosper," observed his wife Bindu.

"I do not know if I have any knack for any business," said Shankar with a sigh.

Bindu thought for a moment and then said, "Do you remember the landlord's comment on a flower I had embroidered on his shawl? He said that had I made the flower on the shawl while it was in the shop, the shop-keeper would have demanded a higher price for it."

"Yes, I remember the old man's comment. So what?"

asked Shankar.

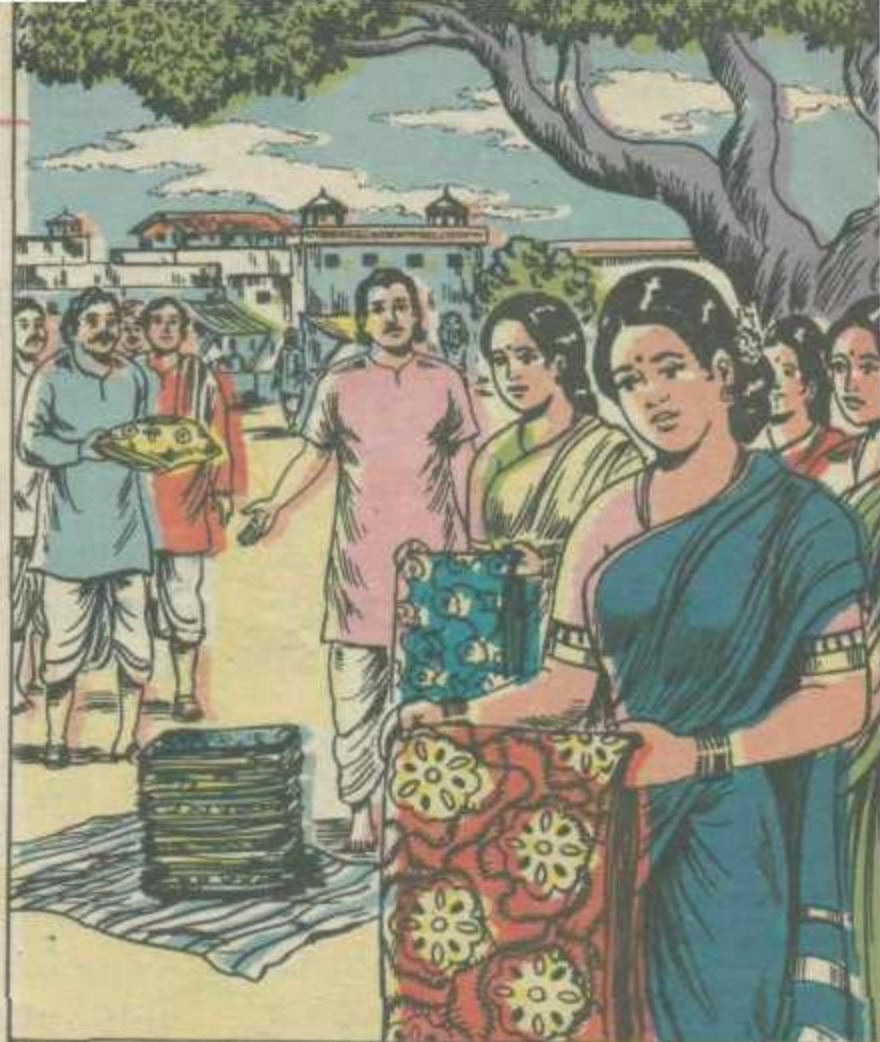
"I suggest that you go to the town and buy some plain sarees of different colours and some colourful threads. I will make flowers and other designs on the sarees. You can then sell them at a higher price," proposed Bindu.

"This is not a bad idea," agreed Shankar. He went to the town and bought fifteen pieces of plain sarees. Bindu worked on them for a full month. The sarees now looked so different and so gorgeous! On an auspicious day Shankar carried the bundle to the town. On his way, he went to the temple of the Mother Goddess and prostrated himself to the deity.

He opened his bundle under a tree in the town and waited for customers. Several men and women examined the sarees and appreciated the art on them, but nobody bought any.

Shankar did not know that those capable of buying the sarees were not likely to locate him under a tree—and that too in a part of the town which was far from the market area. Those who examined the sarees were poor passers-by, who had no money with them.

It was evening. Disappointed,



Shankar closed his bundle and began to walk back home. At last he reached his village. But being tired, he sat down in the foreyard of the temple. Bindu must be waiting for him with great expectations. What would he tell her? That is what worried him more than anything else.

"You seem to be having some excellent sarees!"

The voice that said this was so sweet that Shankar had never heard any music sweeter than that. He looked back with surprise. A lady who was divinely beautiful, looked at him and smiled. Shankar suddenly felt 'dazed, but a great feeling of love and serenity overwhelmed him.

At first Shankar thought she was a lady of some very wealthy house who came to the temple to worship the deity but saw that the temple had been closed. She was perhaps waiting for her escorts to come. But when the lady sat down before him, he saw that the saree she wore was a torn one.

"Mother, the sarees I have are no doubt good. My wife has worked on them very hard. But unfortunately, I could not sell any," said Shankar.

"What a pity! Will you show them to me?"

"Why not, Mother!" Shankar opened the bundle and the lady saw the sarees one after another with curiosity.

"Each one is beautifully embroidered. I wish I could have all of them!" said the lady.

"Mother, I have an impression that you belong to some very high family—maybe a royal family. But why are you wearing a torn saree?"

"Well, my children send quite costly sarees for me. But the chap who serves me sells them through his brother-in-law who is a merchant in the town. But I will buy all these pieces. How much do they cost?" asked the lady.

"All these pieces? I am afraid, that would cost you quite a lot! Two thousand rupees!" cautioned Shankar.

"That is not very much for



some of my sons! Ask the landlord to pay you the money," said the lady.

"Do you call the landlord your son? He is much older than you!" observed Shankar.

"Oh no, nobody is older than I. Don't you worry on that account. Tell him that I have chosen to keep the sarees and ask him to pay for these—two thousand rupees!" said the lady with a smile.

She stood up. Shankar too stood up, ready to go. He felt that he was under a kind of charm. Everything appeared beautiful to him. He trusted the lady and he trusted that the landlord would pay him. He asked, "Mother, why are you alone?"

"I am always alone, my son!" she said.

"Where are your men? When would they come to lead you home? Where is your palanquin?" asked Shankar.

"Don't you worry, my son! Go home. You are tired and hungry," said the lady. There was such a force in her command that Shankar bowed to her and left for home.

But as soon as he was back home, his normal senses woke up. Who was that lady? How

could he forget to take note of the gold crown she was wearing? Was she not the goddess dwelling in the temple? Under what kind of spell was he that this did not strike him? He narrated his experiences to his wife with great excitement. Both of them ran to the temple. But all was quiet there. The temple door was under heavy lock. An owl screeched and there was no sign of any other creature being near about.

They returned home. They spent the night fully awake. Early in the morning Shankar met the landlord and said, "Sir, believe it or not, the goddess bought fifteen sarees from me and asked me to realise the price from you!"

The landlord looked at him with amazement. "Shankar! Are you under some intoxication? I never knew that you had developed such a habit! I am so sorry!"

"Sir, I am perfectly normal. The goddess wore a torn saree and said that the chap who was supposed to take care of Her sold away the sarees she received as offerings!"

Shankar's words bore such a stamp of sincerity that the landlord did not know what to say. "Come, let us go to the priest!"



he said. Shankar followed him. The priest was still asleep, although he was expected to be in the temple by then, for the morning rites.

"Priest, did you clad the deity in the new saree I handed over to you yesterday, on the occasion of my grand-daughter's birthday?" he demanded.

"Of course, I did!" answered the priest.

"Good!" said the landlord. "Now, let us visit the temple. I have received some very strange report about the deity."

The priest was not prepared for this. But there was no way he could avoid the landlord. He fetched the key and accompanied the landlord to the temple.

As the temple door was opened, it was seen that Shankar's cloth bundle lay in front of the deity. The landlord went closer and saw that the saree on

the deity's person was a torn one!

"Where is the new saree? Where are all the other sarees the deity has received from the devotees in the recent past?" he asked.

The priest hemmed and hawed and stammered, but could not give any satisfactory answer.

"Hm!" said the landlord. "You are dismissed." Then he fell before the deity and wept and said, "Mother, what a sinner I am that I have not personally looked into your service! From today it will be different. Woe to me that I put on refined clothes while you the Mother wear torn sarees!"

He then embraced Shankar. Shankar's unusual experience became the talk of the region. People flocked to him requesting sarees the like of which the goddess chose! Bindu worked hard. They prospered.

The temple is still there.





MAGIC OF THE COOKING POT

The poor Sujan worked hard, but he could hardly earn enough to satisfy the needs of his family. However, neither he nor his wife ever grumbled about their condition. Their children too learnt to bear the hardship with patience.

What is more, poverty never made them mean. Whenever someone was in need of their help, they were ready to give it to him. One day a mendicant knocked on their door. "I am starving for two days. Can you give me something to eat?" he said. Sujan, his wife and his children were then about to sit down for eating their lunch. Said Sujan, "My brother, we will gladly give you a share from our food. But what saddens me is, we ourselves are going to eat only handfuls of yesterday's rice mixed with water and salt."

"Give me a little of whatever

you are going to eat," said the mendicant. Sujan and his wife poured half of their gruel into a pot and offered it to the mendicant. The mendicant ate it with great relish. Then he said, "It seems the pot you used for cooking has magic in it. Can you show it to me?"

Sujan's wife was amused. "If you so desire, you can see the cooking pot. But there is no magic in it. I think, the food tasted good to you because you were hungry," she said. The mendicant did not say anything, but handled the pot and seemed to utter some hymn. Then he smiled and left.

In the evening Sujan's wife filled the pot with water and set it on the oven. But when she was ready to pour some rice into it, she saw the pot already filled with delicious *polau*. She was amazed. Sujan heard her exclamation and



came running to see what had happened. He too was amazed. "Well," he said. "We had no magic in our pot, but the mendicant surely put magic into it."

As Sujan's wife emptied the *polau* on a banana leaf, the pot was filled with curry. As she transferred the curry to another vessel, the pot was filled with *payasam*. One after another seven items popped up in the pot!

The family ate to its heart's content. Even then there was much of every item left. They had two equally poor neighbours. They sent the remaining food to their houses.

It continued to happen like that. Day after day Sujan and his

family ate well and gave shares of their delicious food to travellers, beggars and other needy people.

But something strange began to happen in the king's kitchen. The chief cook observed that a good quantity of the items he cooked was missing every day. At first he thought that he was making some mistake in calculating the quantity of the items. But soon he realised that it was not his error. What then could be the mystery of the disappearance of the food? Puzzled, he reported the matter to the palace-manager. He informed the minister and the minister informed the king. Spies were set to see if anybody stole the food. But there was no proof of any theft. Was it then the work of some ghosts? Everybody started wondering.

Just then a spy brought the news of Sujan, a poor man in a distant village, distributing items which looked and tasted like those cooked in the royal kitchen. The king and the minister disguised themselves like ordinary villagers and reached Sujan's village. They went to his house at noon and asked him, "We are travellers to the town. Is there any inn or any temple in the village where we can get some

food?"

"You are welcome to have food and rest here," said Sujan.

As they ate, they were left in no doubt about the fact that the items came from the royal kitchen. But the palace was far away. Even a fast horse-carriage would take three hours to transport the food from the palace to Sujan's house.

"My friend, who cooked these items?" the king asked Sujan.

"Please don't ask me any question about it. Is it not enough that I have been blessed to entertain you?" said Sujan.

"No. This is not enough. You must tell us how you got this food—who gave these items to you!" demanded the king.

"If answer I must, then let me tell you that this cooking pot of mine gave these items to me!" answered Sujan, pointing at the pot.

"Is that so?" asked the king angrily and he picked up the pot and dashed it on the floor and smashed it further with his stick.

Sujan's wife wailed. Sujan consoled her, saying, "Look here, we had nothing to do with this pot developing a miraculous quality. Similarly, if it is destroyed today, it is not our doing.



Why should we grieve? We were used to living on gruel. We will do the same again!"

The king understood that Sujan was not speaking any lie. The mystery was not solved. In a huff he returned to his palace, riding the carriage which was waiting outside the village.

"I am hungry. Lay my lunch quickly!" he commanded his personal staff. But the very next moment he heard a cry from the kitchen. The chief cook shouted saying that all the food had vanished!

A thorough search was made all over the kitchen and throughout the palace. But there was no trace of any food anywhere. The

minister hurried to his home and brought whatever food was there in his kitchen. But no sooner had that been put in a plate than it disappeared.

The situation repeated the next day. All the cooked items vanished from the royal kitchen.

On the third day the hungry king, accompanied by the minister and his bodyguards, went to Sujan and said, "My friend, the guest who smashed your magic pot was none other than myself. I apologise to you. Please lift your curse. Otherwise I will not move from here."

"My lord, I have never cursed you. I do not know the mendicant who sanctified my pot. What can I can do?" said Sujan.

"My friend what you can do immediately is to feed me. I am hungry," said the king.

"My lord, I have only some

gruel in my house!" said Sujan apologetically.

"That would do."

Sujan's wife handed over a dishful of gruel to the king. The king ate it with great relish and said, "Ah! I had never felt so very satisfied with any food. Let me take some rest."

Sujan had nothing better than a tattered mat to offer to the king. The king lay down and slept. Late in the afternoon a rider from the palace brought the news, "Your Majesty, there is no sign of any food disappearing from the royal kitchen any more."

The king was delighted. He offered a job to Sujan in his own court and said, "From today, your family will receive adequate share from the items cooked in our kitchen all the three times a day."

Sujan and his family moved to a building adjacent to the palace.



THE FOURTH ESTATE

"Yonder sits the *Fourth Estate*, more important than them all!" Edmund Burke (1729-97), the British Parliamentarian and author, is believed to have said this pointing his finger at the press gallery in the Parliament house. The Lords, the Commons and the Clergy were the other three Estates or powers in the country.

This is in response to a query by S.C.S. Rao of Bangalore. The *Fourth Estate* has been a synonym, a little pompous though, for the newspapers. They can surely be a great influence on the people as well as their rulers.

U. Jagadeesh of Kurnool is curious about *Femme Fatale*. Beware of her! She—the *femme fatale*, is a beautiful lady who can land a man attracted by her in a dangerous situation.

Hardayal Arora of Bikaner would like to know the difference between *Everyone* and *Everybody*, *Anyone* and *Anybody*, *Someone* and *Somebody*.

Everyone and *Everybody* mean the same thing—every person in a group. *Anybody* and *Anyone* mean any person, as in a sentence like this: Has anyone (or anybody) lost a key?

Someone and *Somebody* also mean the same thing. You use any of these two words when you cannot or do not wish to specify a person. "He sent someone to give me the news of his success."





LET US KNOW

What are the ten names of Arjuna?

—Sunik Kumar Shaw, Abdullanagar.

Arjuna has more than ten names: Sabyasachi, Phalguni, Dyutikrishna, Gandivi, Vivatsu (because he did not take recourse to any *Vivatsa* or ugly and bizarre method in the war), Shubhra, Jishnu, Kaunteya, Bharata, Gudakesha, Partha, Dhananjaya and Kireeti. He has even a few more names.

At what age did Gandhiji leave Africa for India?

—Syed Asifulla Hussain, Bangalore.

In 1914, at the age of 44-45, being born in 1869.

When, where and by whom was the first computer invented?

—S. Chidambarakumar, Calcutta.

The earliest "analytical engine" which can be called the first computer was conceived and partly made by Charles Babbage in London, between 1822 and 1871, with gradual improvement. It could receive instructions from punched cards, make calculations with the aid of a memory-bank and print out the solution to a problem.

During this period George Scheutz of Stockholm, Sweden, developed the first practical programmed computer and exhibited it in the Paris Exposition of 1855. He followed the principles expounded by Babbage.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Devidas Kasbekar



Chandrakant Khata

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for February '90 goes to:—

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The Winning Entry:— "Empty" & "Plenty"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

Earth is here so kind that just tickle her with a hoe, and she laughs with a harvest.

— *Douglas Jerrold*

A great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices.

— *William James*

The man who reads nothing at all is better educated than the man who reads nothing but newspapers.

— *Thomas Jefferson*

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